

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

April 23, 2002

**Immediately Upon Conclusion
of Special Airport Cmte. Meeting**

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Pinard, Shea, DeVries
Alderman Garrity also present.

Absent: Alderman Sysyn

Messrs.: Virginia Lamberton, Barbara Vigneault, Laurel Buccino, Ron
Ludwig, Steve Tellier, Paul Martineau

Chairman Lopez addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Communication from Leo Bernier, City Clerk, requesting to expand the security services at City Hall Complex from 100 to 115 hours weekly to approximately 140 hours weekly to address weekend/evening hours security measures.

Chairman Lopez stated I believe item 3 has been withdrawn.

Ms. Lamberton replied yes, the City Clerk asked that this item be withdrawn as he is working with the Chief of Police to provide coverage.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to receive and file.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Communication from Barbara Vigneault, Director of Elderly Services, requesting to fill a part-time position of Elderly Services Specialist I.

Ms. Vigneault stated I just wanted to let you know of the need for the part-time position and some new information that we have. In order to run two facilities which we currently have for our senior centers, we have the part-time position which would cover if one of the Elderly Services Specialists was out because there

are only three Elderly Services Specialists, two are full-time and one is a part-time position. So, that part-time position has been vacated due to the fact that that person has been put to full-time filling the retired position that we had in February. So, the part-time position is vacant, but that part-time position covers when the other specialists are either on a trip or sick or on vacation, so 50 percent of her time is doing that...running the activities for the time that the other people are out and then we are also running activities for Thursday evening's and Saturdays so we need coverage for Monday's in order to keep that day open. So, if we lose that part-time position that means that we are going to have to be cutting down hours of operation because if you add it up it just doesn't come out because you only have those three positions.

Alderman Pinard asked, Barbara, when you say activities, how many activities do you have per day...say on Hanover Street and then on the west side?

Ms. Vigneault replied now that the Elderly Services Specialist position is running activities on nights and weekends, she's also running new things that we're offering seniors. This week we've had the quilters come in and we've had performances on Thursday evening and Saturday.

Alderman Pinard asked what do you mean by performers?

Ms. Vigneault replied entertainment groups...that was contingent upon filling that full-time position was to operate on Thursday nights until eight and on Saturdays from twelve to four. So, that's the problem...we're covering those extra hours, but we intended to...Monday's activities we intended to use that part-time position to also fill that Monday, so that we could operate five days-a-week plus the Thursdays and Saturdays. So, there just isn't enough people to cover the hours of operation for the need of the activities. The facilities are also used for drop-ins, so that people can drop-in and get the services or other things that are provided by the centers. If we don't have the position then we're not going to be able to do those.

Alderman Pinard asked are there that many people that go to these activities?

Ms. Vigneault replied the thing you have to remember is that the part-time position goes from east to west. So, it's covering time for the west side and the east side. So, that part-time position...50 percent of the time is coverage from when that person is out on the east or when that person is out on the west. So, if you have a three-day trip and that full-time person is taking those people on a full day trip you have to provide coverage for that City facility on those days that that person is out. So, if you have a person who is part-time covering three full-time days those hours are doubled into that time.

Alderman Pinard asked how many times a year do you have three-days trips?

Ms. Vigneault replied quite a few. There are quite a few trips run through the centers.

Alderman DeVries stated the Mayor now currently has a hiring freeze in place for everything except for essential positions. Do you wish to weigh in as to why the part-time position on our agenda was essential to your operation?

Ms. Vigneault replied without the position we're going to have to reduce hours of service and close-up for hours of service for one of the facilities when either east or the part-time person is not there...there's a Specialist I on the east and there's a Specialist I on the west. So, that part-time position covers for when the east is out and when the west is out...50 percent of that part-time position is just covering for those hours that they're out because if you're a 40 hour position and they're out for 40 hours you have a 20 hour position trying to cover 40 hours, so that's two weeks worth of work in one. So, 50 percent of her time is spent just covering for times when the other people are out.

Alderman DeVries stated I understand what you're saying as far as the difficulties in coverage, I think my interpretation on essential is a little bit more to the Police, Fire line rather than Elderly Services and that's why it seemed like a question to me.

Chairman Lopez stated you do have a Specialist II also, right.

Ms. Vigneault replied right.

Chairman Lopez stated she can come out of the office and do this work.

Ms. Vigneault replied no.

Chairman Lopez asked why not?

Ms. Vigneault replied because it's not...she's not a recreation activities person. She doesn't run the activities per se. She provides other services to seniors other than the activities.

Chairman Lopez stated to my knowledge in order to go from a I to a II she has to have that capability in her job description, the last job description I looked at anyway...that she's capable of doing both as a I and II.

Ms. Vigneault stated her job has not been or has it ever been to provide the activities at the senior center.

Chairman Lopez stated but she is capable, under her job description, to do both.

Ms. Vigneault stated she could be trained to do that job, but she doesn't have the experience doing that job.

Chairman Lopez stated I'd recommend to the committee that we go along with the HR Director in not filling this part-time position.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to deny the request to fill a part-time position of Elderly Services Specialist I.

Chairman Lopez addressed a request to the Mayor dated April 19th to fill the Elderly Services Specialist I position at the East Side Center next recommending that it be referred to the HR Director to handle it.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to refer the request to fill the Elderly Services Specialist I to the HR Director and requesting that it be dealt with in a timely manner.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Proposed reallocation of Youth Services Director position, class specification and adoption of ordinance amendment.

Chairman Lopez asked, Laurel, do you wish to say anything in reference to this?

Ms. Buccino stated actually I was here just to hear what the discussion was going to be just because I was not aware until I saw it on the agenda that it was coming up and so I'm here just to answer any questions or to hear the discussion.

Alderman Shea stated I would like Ginny to address this matter.

Ms. Lamberton stated one of my responsibilities is to be responsible for the requests for positions, to analyze them, to look at positions in the hierarchy and try to make sure that they're all equitable and fair and positions are assigned labor grades the same and differently based on the level of responsibilities and the complexity of the jobs and what their requirements are in order to get the job and keep the job, etc. etc....stuff we've talked about before...the classification plan.

Maybe a month-and-a-half, two months ago now the Mayor...after this committee voted to not reorganize elderly and youth the Mayor said he may as well move forward with filling the Director of Youth Services position because Laurel had been in it as Acting for a considerable period of time and just let's move forward here. Whenever I see a job that's going to be filled, I look at it to see if in my opinion based on the facts that I have if I think it's properly classified and at the proper salary grade. So, when I received that message from one of the Mayor's staff to move forward I look at it and based on what I knew about the job, I felt that the grade was higher than the level of responsibility for the position in relationship to other department head positions and from that then as part of the package that I've given to you I started to look at this position in relationship to other positions at salary grade 26 and then I looked at other positions that were higher and I looked at other positions that are lower and then I looked at the job specification itself and I spoke with Laurel about the duties to see if the job specification was still up-to-date to make sure...to verify the duties, in other words, and then I analyzed the points, etc. and I recommend that the position be reallocated down to a salary grade 23.

Alderman Shea asked why was it originally a 26?

Ms. Lamberton replied as you know I was not here so I don't have any personal knowledge, however, my understanding is the former Director was quite charming and I think he was responsible for coordinating the whole Yarger Decker study and it wouldn't be the first time that a consulting firm might not just turn their head and give a little more to the person...they shouldn't do that, okay, but I'm not sure where they were coming from because for the most part the department heads appear to be properly graded. One of the things is you're looking at programming, how many programs, etc. and without just doing the points alone cannot support a 26. If you look at the point factor that they gave to it for supervision how many employees you supervise they gave this position 30 more points than reality because the classification plan, which you don't have in your packet, gives points for numbers of subordinates, etc. and the points that were granted to this position require 11, 12 or 14 employees and that's not the case here and so it was pumped up a little bit in different places which some people do that, I won't do that. I believe that assigning grades is a very important thing and that if you mess around with it at all it has an adverse effect on a whole bunch of stuff and it has a domino effect in the organization as well.

Alderman Shea stated you're separating the consolidation issue to the issue of actually examining the amount of supervisory personnel or the amount of personnel that the person supervises, so that's distinct and equal.

Ms. Lamberton stated one thing has nothing to do with the other. I'm looking at a vacant position.

Alderman DeVries stated the question would be for Ginny. If I understand there may be several positions that came through the Yarger Decker that could be questionable and the best way to handle or the way to handle that reclassification is through attrition or when there's a position change, so that an actual employee is not affected. So, this is why you've been directed to review each position as they come through to see if Yarger Decker did actually place people correctly on the scale?

Ms. Lamberton replied first of all, I was self-directed. I wasn't directed...just by the nature of my job and secondly 99.9% of the time if you're going to move a job down you want to try and do it when it's vacant because it's very uncomfortable otherwise, frankly. So, to answer your question I've self-directed myself when they become vacant to look at them and analyze them.

Alderman DeVries asked how many jobs have you taken a look at since you've been there as Director of HR?

Ms. Lamberton replied formally probably ten.

Alderman DeVries asked and how have you found those...are you finding many discrepancies with Yarger Decker or?

Ms. Lamberton replied the one that I believe...I don't remember if it was after the elections or before the elections but I felt there was inequity in the reverse with an inspector position. There are other ones where I recommended we change some of the language in the job classification itself and the rest I've pretty much just left as they are/were.

Alderman DeVries stated I did receive a phone call from somebody who was interested in this activity affecting Youth Services and they were indicating to me that the first knowledge and I think that you just reiterated this...the first knowledge you had was when the agenda had come out to your office.

Ms. Buccino stated yes.

Alderman DeVries asked is that a normal procedure, wouldn't we normally...when there's a position under review do we have any sort of policy on how we...do we just send out the agenda to let them know or do we have a formal policy from HR?

Ms. Lamberton replied Laurel is not the permanent incumbent in this position. She is the permanent incumbent in the supervisor position. I did meet with her at the time that I was meeting with her to verify the duties of the position and subsequent to that I did an analysis and I moved forward from there. If she were the permanent incumbent she would have been required to fill out a questionnaire and all that other stuff. So, to answer your question, if there is an incumbent in the position yes, but this is just a situation where the individual is acting.

Alderman DeVries stated okay, so I do understand. We do have a policy in place for an incumbent thank you.

Chairman Lopez stated we need a policy within the HR area of her job duties as to how to go about things and how she goes and classifies some of these positions, yes, she does follow a system...they would be notified I'm sure.

Alderman Pinard moved to accept the HR Director's recommendation that the Youth Services Director position be reallocated from Grade 26 to Grade 23 including a new class specification and ordinance amendment. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Ms. Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, advises of the receipt of the following communications:
 - a) request from Welfare Commissioner Martineau to fill a Welfare Specialist II position;
 - b) request from Fire Chief Kane to fill a Firefighter position; and
 - c) request from PR& C Director Ludwig to fill several temporary, seasonal summer positions.

Alderman Pinard moved to approve requests to fill vacant positions outlined. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Garrity stated my question is for the Human Resources Director...dealing with Fire...how many positions is he down currently, do you know?

Ms. Lamberton replied this request is to fill one Firefighter position. He has [and somebody please help me if I'm wrong]. I know we have retirements in Fire and Police, I'm just not sure of how many of what, but I believe he has some people leaving.

Alderman Garrity stated or some people that have already left.

Ms. Lamberton stated he promotes from within and then what happens is we go to the bottom of the pile, so to speak, and we hire firefighters and then you bring in a new firefighter.

Alderman Garrity stated I guess my question is there are four, five, maybe six positions that have opened up over there and people have retired but none of them had been filled and the reason why only one position, I guess, is my question.

Ms. Lamberton stated I can't speak for Chief Kane. The only thing I can tell you is he and I had a discussion sometime in the last week and he was asking me if he had to request a waiver for the higher level ones, the deputies and the...I forget the hierarchy in that department and the answer was I said no, the Police Chief and Frank Thomas had already inquired for the same reasons, so in other words this was after he had submitted this letter but he can now start...I don't think he knew that he could start processing or selecting people to be promoted and then just end up sending this committee and the Mayor a request to fill the entry level positions. So, my guess is he is going to move forward now.

Alderman Garrity asked do you know if this position is going to be a totally new hire or someone that is just going to be transferred from another department or something like that...like fire line to fire prevention or anything like that.

Ms. Lamberton replied I know today that we tested 150 people to be firefighters, so I'm not sure. I can't answer that question.

Alderman Shea stated when the Fire Department and the Police Department appear before us there has been precedence set whereby certain positions (really) have not been filled for periods of time...unexplainably and obviously it could be a budgetary kind of consideration on the part of the department in the sense that they really want to stay under the budget they've been granted and, therefore, they feel comfortable about the manpower and possibly adding a little bit of overtime rather than adding new personnel, but I think Aldermen will attest to that that when we question them and particularly when Alderman sitting in this seat has asked and they've said we've let the position go a little bit longer than maybe what we should and we'll make sure in the future that we fill that position when it becomes vacant. But, it sometimes doesn't remain filled until they feel comfortable about what their budget might be.

Alderman Garrity stated I'd like to respond to that. I think it is imperative that public safety is paramount and I'm sure we're on a hiring freeze, but I think public safety is a no-brainer. I think public safety...when we're down four or five firefighters or four or five police officers, I think it's a no-brainer we've got to hire them.

Alderman Shea stated that's up to the department's to do it, it's not up to the Aldermen to tell them.

Alderman Garrity stated I realize that, Alderman, but I'm making a public statement that I think it's important that we hire those public safety officials.

Alderman Shea stated and I do too and I don't think anyone disputes that including the department heads.

Chairman Lopez stated I think we all agree with that, it's just a process they have to go through. Are there any other questions?

Alderman DeVries replied actually my question would be for Commissioner Martineau if I could have him come forward. I realize this opening was from the untimely death that you had, I believe, in your office.

Commissioner Martineau replied yes.

Alderman DeVries stated at this point in time though that position has been open for three weeks, a month now.

Commissioner Martineau replied two weeks probably.

Alderman DeVries stated just to follow the same course of conversation I had previously, can you explain to me why you might find this to be an essential position.

Commissioner Martineau stated in my correspondence with the Mayor I indicated some other criteria...the thing is we were one staff person short since August of last year they've been working without one person. I finally got the position to be filled and I hired someone and they were going to start on a Thursday and Bob Powers died unexpectedly on a Wednesday and my feeling is the justifications to fill that position then because there was a freeze at that time, are still valid now and one of the reasons in delaying it would be that I already interviewed people and we have qualified candidates and I have someone that I can bring on board right now and we have done all of the things I want to implement in that

department. We haven't reviewed any of the open cases and I want to go back and review these open cases because I know there's economies that can be derived from that and some of the things I have already put into place resulting in savings and I'm requiring more verification and it takes more time and when you only have so many people that means when you're interviewing having to verify and make calls and so forth is a time factor. So, what happens is you can't implement those other things that you want to do. And, right now, after having interviewed people, having a qualified person that I can contact, I feel it's imperative to get that position in place otherwise if we delay it we will have to go through the advertising, the interviewing all over again and there's just a time delay and there's a lot of pressure involved here. I'm putting a lot of requirements on these people and it's a job that always has pressure...we've already had confrontations, I've had to interject myself to say I'm going to back up my case workers. I've had police there escort people out of there so that what's happening is that it's not the same old system anymore, it's a brand new administration with different requirements and people are finding out you don't just come in and we're just going to hand out...or send you to a hotel or a motel or whatever and as I pointed out in there, in January we spent over \$53,000 in hotels and motels. In February it was \$26,000, in March it was \$10,000...so far, we're at \$4,000. So, I want to implement other things so that we can make other economies and I think reviewing past cases and looking at open cases and going back and doing that will also require or show a result in economies. So, I think it's important to fill that position.

Alderman DeVries asked are you one position or two positions down at this time?

Commissioner Martineau replied one. I was fortunate that I hired a person that could come right in and start working right away and didn't have to train them, they already knew what it was and this other person, I feel, can basically do the same thing. So, it's a case of not having to train people, having people that are already in the field coming in and being able to make an impact immediately.

Alderman DeVries stated the cost of your interviews that you alluded to, you said you would have to spend again to readvertise...

Commissioner Martineau stated what would happen if you delay it, you would have to readvertise and then there would be a time delay and then you'd have to interview people and have to select somebody, so it just keeps delaying things and I feel that it's imperative that we do something now.

Chairman Lopez stated I think it's real good that you went from a Welfare Specialist III down to a II so you're saving some money there too, I think that's good management.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion to approve filling positions. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Communication from Chris Chakas, retired employee, advising that he would like the Code of Ordinances Section 33.011 Retired Employees; Policy on Rehiring to be reviewed (Mr. Chakas retired from the City in 1997 and would like to return to City employment but cannot under the existing ordinance.)

Chairman Lopez requested Ms. Lamberton address this matter.

Ms. Lamberton stated the way this is written it talks about they can't be hired in a permanent position, that's understandable and then the ordinance goes on to say "that retired employees may be hired on a temporary basis for a limited duration during peak load periods at the convenience of the city." I suppose if it didn't say "limited duration during peak load periods" that that would resolve the problem. I think there are some times when you want to supplement your workforce or hire somebody who's very knowledgeable and you really don't need another full-time employee, I think it's nice to be able to hire retired people. So, I wouldn't close the door completely on that. I would try to find some kind of language that was not going to mess things up with the Retirement System meaning that the employee would then have to have a retirement deduction or accruing leave or whatnot. You want to have something there that it's just very casual labor, by the hour, and it doesn't impact on the health and insurance costs or the vacation or sick time or anything else, but that they could work. It's a win/win situation because the former employee has a lot to offer and keeps them happy and then it makes us happy too in a way and if it doesn't work out there's no appeals or anything, it's just it didn't work out.

Alderman Shea stated I know that Ms. Tessier retired as a Principal and now works as the Assistant Superintendent over at the School Department, I don't know...

Ms. Lamberton stated I don't have any knowledge of that but typically if you're in a Group I position and you retire out of that and you're collecting retirement you can work in a Group I position again.

Alderman Shea stated I'm sure what's she's doing is being paid per diem. So, basically there could be some arrangement that way.

Ms. Lamberton stated I think we could but it's up to the committee and the Board, I can draft something up.

Alderman Pinard stated I work at the toll booth and I'm retired, but I would like Human Resources to look at this because I think it's a good idea to be able to put the seniors to work.

Alderman DeVries stated I just might recommend that we carefully take a look at the pension system though to see if there are income caps or other items that need to be adhered to, so we can structure the ordinance around that. I realize there are several different pensions systems that could apply in the City but I would assume this individual's coming out of the City Retirement System as opposed to Group I or Group II.

Ms. Lamberton stated we talk about trying to treat everybody the same in fairness. In fact, if somebody is retired out of Group II they can work for the City full-time and contribute to the City's Retirement System and then retire from the City whereas if we have an employee who's retired from the City they can't work for us. But, we definitely want to look at the impact on our Retirement System.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to refer Section 33.011 of the City Ordinances to the HR Director for review and find appropriate language.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. New Hire/Termination Reports submitted by the HR Director for informational purposes only.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to receive and file the reports submitted.

TABLED ITEMS

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

9. Communication from Alderman Gatsas suggesting that the disabled be included in the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Elderly Services.
(Note: tabled on 2/6/02 pending report from Maureen McCarthy Slagle.)

Chairman Lopez asked, Ginny, do you have any comments you'd like this committee to hear.

Ms. Lamberton stated it is my understanding that the Mayor has proposed, through CIP, to have a position funded through CIP to be a grant writer for the City; that is not in writing here; that is just something that happened to be told to me; that included a suggestion that we have a grant writer be assigned to Elderly; that was a whole package. Let me review Alderman Gatsas' communication. We have talked about this. If we were to walk through the bullets in Alderman Gatsas' letter, if you look at the item, it talks about collect and disseminate information relative to services and programs available to the disabled or provide services and programs directly to the disabled to be funded with government grants...most of these items...they're all very wonderful items but there is already organizations that provide these services and there's no point in us duplicating that, it just costs us money to repeat what somebody else is already responsible to do basically. What could happen though is Elderly and maybe some of the other human services agencies could maybe...like this is what Elderly Services does, they have a book that they refer to when people come into their office asking them questions about services, this is what they define as case management. They go to this book that they have and it's a resource book and they'll say oh, you have a child or you have a sister that appears to be having Alzheimer's well, call Easter Seals...here's their phone number. So, information like this would probably be good in a lot of the offices that deal with the public in general even just the Clerk's office just have something available...people don't know where to go exactly, but we don't want to be financing duplication of services.

Alderman Shea stated so your recommendation would be to receive and file.

Ms. Lamberton replied yes, I would say that.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to receive and file Alderman Gatsas' communication.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

10. Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending Section 33.049 Special Merit Pay Increases by changing the requirements of how they shall be granted.”

(Note: this item was referred back to Committee at the 11/17/01 BMA meeting and tabled on 2/06/02.)

Alderman Shea moved to recommend that the Special Merit Pay Increases not be allowed. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Lopez stated there are two items of new business one of which has been reviewed by the HR Director and the other has not. One is at the Highway Department where the individual has left and Frank is in the process of surveying. I think there's a lot of things in the Assessors here...I want to sent it back to Ginny, I want you to work with Ginny on it and come up with her recommendation as to what we should do down there. There's no secret from any of the Aldermen and the department head that I think and I know that you're in a situation, Steve, and I think that you have to look at this in the long-range and not be hasty in filling this position. I believe that you're going to need some appraisers in that department and I think you need to look at that department, like other departments and also the HR Director is looking at all of the positions that become vacant to make sure that Yarger Decker is in the right line for that and that we're following and trying to save some money in the City, so with that I am going to turn this over to her and I'd like you to work with her and if it's needed right away I'm sure she'll review it and get it back to us, but we're in a budget crunch right now and I'd sooner wait until I get a word from her other than just approving it.

Request of the Board of Assessors to fill a vacant Customer service Rep II position.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to refer the Board of Assessor's request to the HR Director requesting she work with the Board of Assessors.

Request of the Public Works Director to fill the Land Surveyor/Chief of Survey position recently vacated.

Chairman Lopez stated what happened here is someone quit on him going into the private sector and he's asking us to replace him and he's in that type of season right now. Ginny, do you want to give us something here so the Aldermen understand what's going on between Frank and you and the correspondence.

Ms. Lamberton stated it's a licensed Land Surveyor and Chief of Survey for the Department of Highways and as you can imagine at this time of year is the time of year that the level, quantity of work increases significantly due to the fact that we can get out and measure and whatever and it's also the supervisor for some crews and if you look at the organizational chart there's six positions reporting to this position, so somebody's going to have to be responsible for these crews and this particular position does have the requirement of a license by the State of New Hampshire, so I would recommend that we fill it for that reason and the other reason is that the individual who vacated the position hadn't been here that long and so there was not much of a termination pay out. So, by the time the position gets posted and filled some monies will have been saved anyway.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to approve the request to fill the Land Surveyor/Chief of Survey position.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee